

BOROUGH OF SOUTHMONT
148 WONDER STREET
JOHNSTOWN, PA 15905

MINUTES FOR AUGUST 19, 2024

The pledge of allegiance was conducted, and the scheduled August 19, 2024 Council meeting was called to order by President Doug Beri at 4:00 p.m.

Present: Council Members Doug Beri, Richard Burkert, Sheree Speicher(virtual), Robert Morgan, Herb Ewald, Eugene Kupchella, Matthew McVicker, Borough Manager Amanda Layton; Police Chief William “B.J.” Newman; Fire Chief Steve Costic; Solicitor Eric Hochfeld; Engineer Todd Banks; Mayor Anthony Keiper; Street Commissioner Sam McAdams, Asst. Sec. Debra Riek.

Visitors: Robert Walker (312 State St.), John A. Klanchar (104 Dahlia St.), Lawrence and Eileen O’Reilly (511 Edward St.)

Public Comment:

Mr. O’Reilly read a letter to council regarding stormwater issues he is having at his property noting they began having issues after the sewer project on Christine Court behind his property. Mr. O’Reilly stated that he has spent over \$15,000.00 to try to correct the water issue that is eroding the front hillside and flowing onto the sidewalk, which freezes in the winter and he would appreciate anything the borough can do to help resolve the problem.

Mr. Walker inquired about the status of the fence on Thoburn St. and Leila Street and inquired why the borough felt the need to paint crosswalks in the area and whether the borough will be using the Cambria County prisoner work program this year, as they have in the past.

Mr. Klanchar stated to the council that he is unhappy with the fact the borough appears to give special treatment and allowances to council members that do not apply to borough residents noting he believes that certain building permits are required and should have been issued before any project was completed on a property in the borough even if the property is owned by a borough council member.

Minutes

A motion was made by Mr. Morgan to approve the August 19, 2024 Council Meeting Minutes. Motion seconded by Mr. Burkert. All in favor, motion carried (7-0).

Police Chief’s Report

The July 2024 Police Chief’s report was received. Chief Newman reported that there were 421 calls received for the month of July with 79 of those calls being for Southmont Borough and 19 traffic citations issued this month.

Fire Company Report

The July 2024 Fire Chief’s Report was received. Chief Costic reported 15 calls for the month of July and 7 were for Southmont Borough. Chief Costic stated that the reimbursement check program is working well, and more members are showing up for emergency calls.

Engineer's Report

Mr. Banks reported that the flow meters are still in place for the borough and are showing good numbers for the allowable peak flow per day, but we are still not under the allowed hourly peak flow rate.

Zoning Officer's Report

The July 2024 Zoning and Property Maintenance Reports were received.

Solicitor's Report

Solicitor Hochfeld stated he is working on drafting a letter directed to Greater Johnstown Water Authority to request an update to the 2023 agreement regarding maintaining previous status quo of each municipality billing their own properties and falling under their own sewer mandates for the Southmont Borough properties tied into Westmont Borough line as well as Westmont Borough properties tied into Southmont Borough lines to include 1015/1017 Luzerne Street.

Solicitor Hochfeld reported that Laurel Municipal Inspection Agency had difficulty locating contact information for several properties owned by LLCs noting he has provided what information he could locate. Mr. Ewald asked Solicitor Hochfeld if he would look into properties that have been on the property maintenance violation list for over a year and try to resolve the problems. Solicitor Hochfeld stated there are many reasons for hearings being continued.

Solicitor Hochfeld stated an appeal has been filed regarding the recent Zoning Hearing Board decision on the fence at 201 Leila Street.

Street Commissioner's Report

The Street Commissioner Report was received. Mr. Ewald inquired about the street sweeper not being inspected. Mr. McAdams stated that he will make an appointment to have the street sweeper inspected.

Borough Manager Report

The Borough Manager Report was received. Mrs. Layton stated that the borough has submitted a request for county probation workers to help the street crew and are on a wait list.

Mayor's Report

Mayor Keiper had a resident on Harding Street approach him regarding an inlet that was clogged by her home. Mr. Keiper spoke with Mr. McAdams and the inlet is on the schedule to be cleaned next week. Mayor Keiper stated he had the privilege to officiate a wedding at Greenhouse Park this month and everything went well.

Committees:

Administration: Nothing to report

Community Planning & Improvement: Mr. Burkert reported a representative from each municipality along with the Cambria County Planning Commission met to review the proposals received from consultants interested in the proposed West Hills Multi-Municipal Implementable Comprehensive Plan noting that The EADS Group was chosen as the lowest and most responsible consultant. Mr. Burkert

stated now that a project cost is available the next step is to apply for half of the funding through the Pennsylvania Municipal Assistance Program noting the remaining half of the cost would be split among the participating municipalities. Mr. Burkert noted the resolution is only to apply for funding and does not financially commit the borough to anything yet. A motion was made by Mr. Burkert to approve Resolution 2024-02, authorizing an application to the Pennsylvania Municipal Assistance Program. Motion seconded by Mr. Kupchella. All in favor, motion carried (7-0).

Emergency Management: Nothing to report.

Finance: Mrs. Speicher reported that the finance committee met to review an initial worksheet for the 2025 budget and the borough is in good standing at this time.

GJWA: Nothing to report

MS4/Stormwater Nothing to report

Personnel: A motion was made by Mr. Kupchella to approve the updated job descriptions. Motion seconded by Mr. McVicker. All in favor, motion carried (7-0).

A motion was made by Mr. Burkert to approve hiring Tyler Fenton through the Hiram G. Andrews externship program. Motion seconded by Kupchella. All in favor, motion carried (7-0).

Police: Nothing to report.

Property Maintenance and Streets: Nothing to report.

Shade Trees: Mr. Burkert reported the plan for next year is to apply for a state grant that would provide funding to have a professional perform a shade tree inventory and assessment.

New Business

A motion was made by Mr. Morgan to approve the request from Westmont Hilltop School District Special Event Permit for the Homecoming Parade on September 21, 2024. Motion seconded by Mr. Kupchella. All in favor, motion carried (7-0).

A motion was made by Mr. Morgan to approve the request from Bishop McCort High School to “Turn the Town Teal”. Motion seconded by Mr. Kupchella. All in favor, motion carried (7-0).

Business Items

A motion was made by Mr. Morgan to approve ratification of payroll from July 16, 2024 through August 19, 2024 in the amount of \$12,834.84. Motion seconded by Mr. Burkert. Roll call: Mr. Beri, Mr. Burkert, Mr. Kupchella, Mrs. Speicher, Mr. Morgan, Mr. McVicker and Mr. Ewald. All in favor. Motion carried (7 -0).

A motion was made by Mr. Morgan to approve payment of bills from July 16, 2024 through August 19, 2024 in the amount of \$268,663.91. Motion seconded by Mr. Burkert. Roll call: Mr. Beri, Mr. Burkert,

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Mr. Kupchella, Mrs. Speicher, Mr. Morgan, Mr. McVicker and Mr. Ewald. All in favor, motion carried (7-0).

A motion was made by Mr. Morgan to approve transfers from July 16, 2024 through August 19, 2024 in the amount of \$148,807.00. Motion seconded by Mr. Burkert. Roll call: Mr. Beri, Mr. Burkert, Mr. Kupchella, Mrs. Speicher, Mr. Morgan, Mr. McVicker and Mr. Ewald. All in favor, motion carried (7-0).

A motion was made by Mr. Morgan to approve the July 2024 treasurer's report. Motion seconded by Mrs. Speicher. All in favor, motion carried (7-0).

A motion was made by Mr. Morgan to accept the Tax Collector's Report for July 2024. Motion seconded by Mr. Burkert. All in favor. motion carried (7-0).

A motion was made by Mr. Morgan to enter an Executive Session at 4:50 p.m. to discuss legal matters. Motion seconded by Mr. Kupchella. All in favor, motion carried (7-0). Executive Session ended at 4:49 p.m. and council resumed its regularly scheduled meeting.

A motion was made by Mr. Morgan to authorize Solicitor Hochfeld to intervene in litigation on behalf of Southmont Borough based on its interest in Southmont Borough Ordinance No. 514 and in support of the decision of the Southmont Borough Zoning Hearing Board dated June 25, 202 regarding a notice of appeal filed by the owners of 201 Leila Street. Motion seconded by Mr. McVicker. All in favor, motion carried (7-0).

There being no further business, a motion was made by Mr. Morgan for adjournment of the August 19, 2024 meeting at 4:50 p.m. Motion seconded by Mr. McVicker. All in favor, motion carried (7-0).

Respectfully submitted,
Debra Riek
Assistant Secretary